



adoption connections

Summer 2004 Issue



ASAP

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"...improve access, quality, and delivery of post-placement and post-finalization services to all adoptive families in the State of Tennessee."

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With treatment, victims of child abuse can begin to heal, abused children can grow up to be successful adults and the cycle of abuse can be broken. Junior's House, Inc., is working to ensure this happens.

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Adoptive families in Tennessee now have access to the support they need and deserve as they travel the lifelong journey of adoption! Adoption Support And Preservation (ASAP) officially began providing post-adoption services on May 24, 2004. The **ASAP** program was designed to address an ever-increasing need, which is, "to improve access, quality, and delivery of post-placement and post-finalization services to all adoptive families in the state of Tennessee."

In order to provide statewide services, **ASAP** is built upon a collaboration of three agencies with over a century of combined experience: AGAPE Child and Family Services, serving the Western part of the state; Catholic Charities of Tennessee, Inc., serving Middle Tennessee; and Harmony Adoptions of Tennessee, Inc., in the East.

"The specialized support and care is intended to provide a service that is not typically accessible," said Pam Wolf, director of Harmony Adoptions, the lead agency in the **ASAP** collaboration. **ASAP** is designed to be a lifelong aid in the support and help of adopted children and families, by providing them with family and individual counseling, crisis intervention, support/educational groups, and other services, described below.

Wolf said that the program's first focus is "adoptions that have been finalized," as access to adoption competent services following finalization have been very limited. According to the **ASAP** proposal, "the Tennessee Department of Children's Services states that 973 adoptions were finalized from

July 2002-June 2003. Most adoptions do not disrupt before legalization; over 80% remain intact (Groza and Rosenberg, 1999). The **ASAP** project will provide post adoption services to all eligible children and families." In early 2005, **ASAP** will begin providing services following placement, prior to finalization.

To begin their program, **ASAP** has a summer full of trainings planned with their contracted agency, Spaulding for Children. These trainings will ensure that all **ASAP** staff maximize their skills and are certified as Master Trainers by Spaulding for Children.

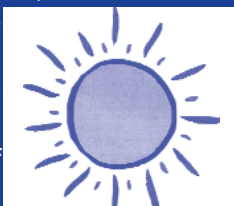
ASAP provides a wide range of services, including:

1. Intensive Crisis Intervention Services
2. Family and Individual Counseling
3. Support Groups for Adoptive Parents, Children and Siblings
4. Adoptive Parent Advocate and Mentoring Program
5. Respite services, called the Relief Team
6. Care Management Services
7. Building community capacity and a network of professionals to provide post-adoption services by providing training for licensed child-placing agency staff as well as community service providers.
8. Providing a statewide toll-free hotline and internet information and referral service
9. Developing an ASAP Solution Advisory Committee
10. Distributing a statewide client Needs Assessment

If you would like to access ASAP services, or just get more information about the program, contact the toll-free number: 1(888) 848 - ASAP (2727)

Pam Wolf discussed some of ASAP's services, highlighting **SUPPORT GROUPS**, which are scheduled to begin in August:

"We believe that these group processes will lead to interdependence among families who have shared the experience of adoption. Access to peer and professional support, educational and emotional growth opportunities, family focused activities and recreation, personal reflection time and community meals lend themselves to the development of meaningful relationships. Parent, child, and sibling support sessions will be held simultaneously. Each session will be combination of education, recreation, information, and sharing. Each session has a theme that is reflected in all concurrent support sessions. Sessions will have a discussion or interesting activity on the topic. At the end of the small group sessions all family members will come back together and staff will facilitate discussion of individual experiences."



Also provided through the support groups will be **ADOPTIVE PARENT TRAINING**. Training will be geared to the needs identified by the adoptive parents in each region of the state. The monthly training sessions will then cover these topics. Some of the trainings topics are:

Trauma, Loss and Grief
Surviving Survival Behaviors
Ways to Integrate your Adopted Child into your Family: Ceremonies and Rituals
Facilitating Attachment
Common Questions Adoptees Might Ask
How to Explain the Adoption to Others
Involving Birth Siblings
Holidays and Change
Educational Advocacy
Common/Core Issues in Adoption
Predictable Crisis Periods for Adoptive Families
How Can Families Best Deal with Crisis?
What to Do When the Adoption is "Threatened"
Parenting with Love and Logic

A key to the success of support groups is **MENTORING**. Experienced adoptive parents will be paired with new adoptive families. The mentoring family will provide support and assistance on a bi-monthly basis and as the relationship develops, the "mentorees" will also become mentors to new adoptive families.

Another ASAP priority is to build capacity within community to meet the needs of adoptive families. As stated in the proposal, "The ASAP project is committed to building community capacity through training and the development of resource networks. Professionals, communities, and families will be trained to understand the unique issues facing post-adoptive families." The training provided will include the following courses:

Adoption Support & Preservation Curriculum Training. This training highlights the key mental health treatment issues faced by adoptive families.

Assisting Post-adoptive Families; Solution-focused Interactions... Focuses on assisting Care Managers and therapists in incorporating Solution Focused Interviewing into their approach of supporting post-adoptive families.

Child Assessment and Preparation Curriculum Training... An ecological, child-focused practice model that can help pre- and post-adoption worker prepare children from the child welfare system for the challenges they will face in the future.

Cultural Competence in Child Welfare (CCC) Curriculum Training... Outlines five basic steps in the developmental process of adapting one's practice to cultural competence.

Effectively Responding to the Emotional Aspects of Trauma, Loss, and Grief... Explores the emotional issues and painful experience for those dealing with termination of parental rights as well as the issues related to moving children into an adoptive placement.

Family Assessment... Focuses on the development of a comprehensive family assessment that increases a participant ability to work with families experiencing difficulties.

Family Bound Curriculum Training... A trainer-to-trainer session designed to equip agency workers to implement the entire Family Bound Curriculum, which contains nine psycho-educationally based sessions that explore the issues involved in preparing youth to successfully transition (or re-transition) into a family.

Special Needs Adoption (SNAC) Curriculum Training... provides child welfare professionals an opportunity to examine current needs of the adoption field, build skill in the utilization of tools in family preparation and assessment process, build knowledge and skill in writing a family preparation and assessment summary, develop strategies for collaboration with colleagues, define key roles the adoption worker plays in post placement services prior to finalization, understand the historical context of foster parent adoption, share and examine strategies for engaging the foster family, enhance the capacities of participants to deal with difficult decisions.

Working with Sexually Abused Children in Adoptive Placements... Addresses sexual abuse and its effects on children and adoptive or foster families.

Contact Advantage: Engaging Systems, Families and Children.... Highlights the key elements to engaging systems and individuals into the change process.

Once the Master Trainers have completed their training preparation, they will begin to provide the previously mentioned trainings to public and private service providers in the community.

ASAP HAS HIGH HOPES FOR SUCCESS! THEY PROJECT SOME OF THEIR OUTCOMES TO INCLUDE:

95% of the families served reporting a strengthened family relationship as a result of post-adoption services received

A response time of 24 hours to the family in need

Family and children support groups available to all adoptive families within the twelve DCS regions

80% of families stable at 6 months; 90% of families reporting satisfaction with services in Survey

ABOUT THE COLLABORATING AGENCIES

Agape

Agape Child and Family Services, Inc., a local Christian-based non-profit organization, was established in 1970 by opening an office in Memphis, Tennessee. Agape has provided adoption services through the Special Needs Adoption Program, and operates the AGAPE Counseling Center, which serves more children, individuals, and families than any other faith-based counseling center in the Mid-South area.

Catholic Charities of Tennessee

Catholic Charities has served thousands of individuals through a range of programs and services since 1962. Family Counseling, Refugee Resettlement and Adoption Services were among the earliest programs offered. Catholic Charities' underlying philosophy in delivering services is expressed in their logo: Acts of Love, Goodwill, and Kindness.

Harmony Adoptions

Harmony Adoptions has been helping grow families through adoption since 1996. Education, counseling and support services are essential aspects of their adoption process. In 2001, Harmony was awarded the Infant Adoption Awareness Grant, and has provided training to over 1000 health and mental health professionals regarding the adoption alternative.

Spaulding for Children

Spaulding for Children is a Michigan non-profit organization founded in 1968. Its initial purpose was to seek to make a better life for children without families. Spaulding for Children has long advocated the belief that all children needing adoption deserve families and can be adopted, as well as defining the services and supports needed for adoptive families and children. The Agency has three major programs: Spaulding Institute for Family and Community Development; the National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption; and Child and Family Services.

“ANSWERING THE CALL”

NATIONAL RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

An exciting new national adoption recruitment campaign will be appearing on televisions and newspapers near you in the immediate future. In a partnership with the Children's Bureau, *Adopt US Kids* has joined forces with The Ad Council and Kirshenbaum, Bond and Partners (KBP) advertising agency in New York City to create and distribute a multi-media campaign to raise awareness of adoption.

This campaign will include public service advertising on television, radio, print and Internet PSAs. The campaign will issue a call-to-action for family-oriented Americans to consider adopting a child out of the foster care system and will increase public awareness in general about the children who wait for permanency. The media campaign is scheduled to begin airing in mid-to-late July and is scheduled to air on media outlets during the next two years.

Individuals who see or hear the public service announcement and are interested in learning more about adoption through the foster care system will be directed to a call a toll-free telephone number answered by *Adopt US Kids*. *Adopt US Kids* will take down some basic contact information for the family and will route the information from Tennessee callers to a Recruitment Response Team (RRT). The RRT staff will contact the family to give them more specific information about the adoption process in Tennessee and connect them with the specific adoption staff in their area of the state. The Recruitment Response Team staff will follow-up with the family until they have become involved with an agency that meets their needs. In Tennessee, the Recruitment Response Team will consist of one staff person through the REACT program who will make the initial contacts with all Tennessee families, and designated representatives from each of the 12 regions of the state who will help to connect families to their local resources.

Miracles waiting to happen



Arthur

DOB:12/5/88

More About Arthur

Arthur loves to tinker with things such as building projects, and mechanical things. He enjoys animals, especially dogs and cats. Arthur has a sense of humor and likes to talk once he gets to know someone. Arthur likes TV, camping, walking the dogs and riding his bicycle. Arthur receives special education services.

What Others Say About Arthur

Arthur's case manager says, "He is a quiet child with many good qualities and is interesting to be around."

His foster mom says, "Arthur requires a lot of attention, but needs his quiet time too."

For more information:

Kelly Buttram, 423-942-3485



More About Karen

Karen is a beautiful young lady with an outgoing personality. Karen is a loving child with a caring heart. She has a beautiful voice, but must be encouraged to sing in the company of others. Karen is an intelligent lady with great potential.

Karen does well in school, and her resource classes help her academic success. She is typical teen with respect to talking on the phone and going shopping.

What Others Say About Karen

Karen's foster parents say, "She is a joy to have in our home. She enjoys helping others. Karen seems to have a talent for entertaining young children, particularly those who have special needs."

For more information:

Tisa Zimmerman, 888-742-3905



Karen

DOB:11/1/86



Juan

DOB:7/29/90

Mayra

DOB: 6/27/87

More About Juan & Mayra

Juan is a young man with a great sense of humor. He is a trustworthy, honest, young man who is looking forward to being part of a family. Juan loves to play football, listen to music, and watch movies. He also loves the beauty of nature and would love to travel to see as much of the world as he can. Juan hopes to one day work with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Mayra is a fun loving young lady. She loves to play basketball. Mayra also stated that she loves to get manicures and go shopping. In her spare time, she writes poetry and songs. Mayra wants to go to college at TSU and earn a degree as a neonatal nurse. Mayra loves to be around small children.

What Others Say About Juan & Mayra

Juan's counselor states, "Juan is an upbeat child with a wonderful sense of humor."

Mayra's adoption counselor says, "Mayra is a beautiful girl. She is very intelligent and has high aspirations for herself."

For more information:

Shawn Cline or Trina Ragan, 800-521-5436

More About Johnny

Johnny is a young man who enjoys playing video games and basketball. Johnny is also a very hard worker. He enjoys cleaning and repairing things, especially when he needs an outlet. He is eager to please and helps out willingly with chores around the house. At school, Johnny works in the school restaurant in the kitchen. He is diligent worker and gives 110% at everything he does. Johnny always ensure he is well-groomed and well-dressed. He even helps prompt others to do the same.

What Others Say About Johnny

Johnny's adoption worker says, "Johnny has a great work ethic. He is diligent and he never complains; he just does what needs to be done. Johnny is very sweet and he is also respectful of authority."

Johnny's mentor says, "Johnny likes to work. He is very neat and clean and even meticulous in his work. He sometimes has problems with peer pressure but when you get him off to himself he is a really good kid. I've never had any problems out of Johnny."

For more information:



Johnny

DOB: 6/12/87

"I want a home in the country that has lots of animals."



Help a child find a family



More About Isaiah

This is a child who loves to be cuddled and held. He will respond by smiling and laughing. Isaiah has been diagnosed with sever Cerebral Palsy and severe brain damage. He is also blind. Isaiah is fed through a g-tube. Despite his limitations, Isaiah is a healthy child overall. He loves to hear music and people talking.

What Others Say About Isaiah

Isaiah's foster mother says, "I love Isaiah like my own child, but I am not able to provide the long-term care that he will need."

Isaiah

DOB: 12/29/00

For More Information:

Shanita Ogburn, 731-265-7098



More About Opal

Opal likes boys, music, clothes and jewelry. Opal is a child who has had a difficult past but is looking forward to better future. She has a quiet, gentle, thoughtful, and happy spirit. She is also independent and high spirited. She is at that in between stage in life; sometimes she enjoys being a young girl and others times she feels ready to be a woman.

What Others Say About Opal

Opal is a pretty girl who has a lot of love to give when she can build a foundation of trust. She is an intelligent child who has the potential to accomplish her goals if she can overcome her low self-esteem.

For more information:

Carolyn Beach, 423-913-2569



Opal

DOB: 7/8/89



More About James

James is a slender built male. He is intelligent, mannerable and friendly. He loves sports, especially basketball and football. He enjoys outdoor activities. He plays basketball and hopes to play football in the future. He also enjoys traveling. He is still trying to decide what he would like to do in the future.

What Others Say About James

James is a very nice young man. He is shy, gentle and friendly. He is a follower and needs to have a strong male figure in his life to teach and guide him. He needs a family who will help him with schoolwork, as he is a slow learner and needs encouragement to complete his assignments.

James

DOB: 12/28/90

For more information:

Cheryl Talley, 423-634-1803

More About Brittney

Brittney is very attractive. She takes great pride in her appearance. Brittney has an outgoing personality, a beautiful smile, and loves to talk. She is a delight to parent and fun to be around. She likes stuffed toys, pretty clothes, and jewelry. Brittney likes to shop and always wants to get something new to wear. She also enjoys going out to eat, and especially likes fried shrimp.

What Others Say About Brittney

Brittney is typically a sweet, happy young girl. However, she does have periods of feeling angry, which she is learning to control and channel in positive directions. She makes friends easily and enjoys school, church, and social events. Brittney is an average student, and is willing to work hard to do her best. Brittney has made tremendous progress in her present foster home and has bonded with the foster mother. She is a delight to her social worker, who has such rewarding counseling periods with her. The worker states, "She is a fun, nice, young lady with great potential."

For more information:

Anne Brewer, 731-644-7376



Brittney

DOB: 12/28/91

A VISIT TO JUNIOR'S HOUSE



SHANE

If you ever have the opportunity to meet with Shane he'll tell you how much he loves animals, especially horses. He is hoping to do some horseback riding this summer. His second pastime for the summer, he anticipates, will be swimming. Shane's favorite movie is Scooby Doo, and he also loves to watch Star Wars. He enjoys reading and is intrigued by Greek Mythology in particular.

During the visit with Shane he also displayed an interest in drawing and drew the picture of the Samurai warrior featured on the following page. He loves to watch or read anything about the Samurai. Shane is doing well in his current foster home, but hopes to be with a forever family soon. He is a sweet and quiet child who has overcome a lot of losses. For more information about this child, please contact Sabrina Hill at 931-380-3341 or 1-800-521-5436.

JUNIOR'S HOUSE

Junior's House is a unique and special Child Advocacy Center to Shane. He lost his brother, Junior, several years ago due to abuse. Junior's House has been established in his honor as a result of this tragic incident. Shane was recently invited by Junior's House to visit. The actual county investigator that was at the scene of Junior's death, greeted Shane and walked him through the facility. He also had the opportunity to talk with and draw for one of their therapists, which he greatly enjoyed. In a recent interview with Shane regarding his visit, he was reluctant to share many memories or feelings of his experience at Junior's House, but he fully understands the purpose of Junior's House and the honor it is in his brother's memory. It is important to Junior's House and the State of Tennessee, that our children feel honored and that we recognize their losses and will do what we can to prevent future losses.

Junior's House is one of those shining efforts to prevent and respond to child abuse in the life of our children. Junior's House, Inc. was founded in 2001 in response to a child abuse investigation and the growing problem of child abuse and neglect. In 2003, there were over 1,300

reports of child physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect in the 17th Judicial District, averaging 110 reports per month. In 2003, Lincoln County alone had an average of 32 child abuse and neglect reports per month.

The mission of Junior's House is:

Junior's House, Inc., is dedicated to bringing together the victim and the Child Protective Investigative Team, in one location, to lessen the trauma experienced by victims of child abuse and their families and to increase the awareness of the problem of child abuse and abuse prevention.

Prior to Advocacy Centers such as this one, child abuse victims were taken from one agency to another to repeat the story of their abuse. With this type of processing, children were "slipping through the cracks" and offenders were repeating their offense. At Junior's House, Inc., the child only speaks with one person in a videotaped interview.

The doors at Junior's House were opened on September 2003 and hours of operation are 8am-4pm. They conduct forensic interviews and investigations with a multi-disciplinary team, consisting of CPS, law enforcement, District Attorney, medical, mental health, and child advocacy center representatives in a child-friendly atmosphere.



Beginning July 2004, they will have their own therapist to provide counseling for the abused child and non-offending caregivers for both groups and individuals. In addition to therapeutic services, Junior's House, Inc., also provides family services and prevention programs including:

PATH CLASSES FOR FOSTER AND KINSHIP TRAINING

FOSTER PARENTING CLASSES

ART-BASED PREVENTION PROGRAM

DATING, VIOLENCE, & SEXUAL ASSAULT

PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

ADOLESCENT SUPPORT GROUPS

PREVENTION

As stated in the Executive Summary for Junior's House, Inc., "In addition to the Counseling Center, Junior's House, Inc., will soon offer a prevention program to educate adolescents to make positive life decisions and aid in preventing abuse and violence. Youth who are involved in delinquent patterns and negative behaviors early, are more likely to become serious, violent, and chronic offenders later in life." The Child Welfare League of America stated that the children who were reported as abused or neglected were six to seven times more likely than other children to be arrested for delinquent behavior or repeat the cycle of abuse.

With treatment, victims of child abuse can begin to heal, abused children can grow up to be successful adults and the cycle of abuse can be broken. Junior's House, Inc., is working to ensure this happens.

EVERY DAY!

Tragically, an average of three children die every day as a result of child abuse or neglect.

Thousands more suffer from some form of abuse or neglect every day.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

To report suspected child abuse, call the following number:

Tennessee

Hot Line

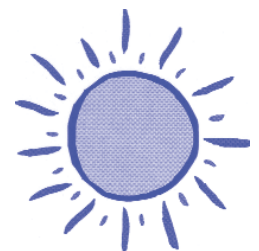
1-877-237-0004

For more information about Juniors House, Inc., please call 931-438-3233



"Samurai Warrior"
by Shane

Please submit any article topics or stories for Adoption Connections to Kim Schuerman at the Center for Adoption
1210 Foster Avenue
Nashville, TN 37243 or
Kim.Schuerman@state.tn.us



WATCH FOR THE DAVE THOMAS TITANS GAME FOR ADOPTION

REACT (Resource Exchange for Adoptable Children in Tennessee) has agreed to partner with the Dave Thomas Foundation to bring awareness about adoption of children with special needs through a special statewide recruitment event at a Tennessee Titans football game. The event, known as the Dave Thomas Game for Adoption, will focus on finding adoptive families for children who are in the Tennessee foster care system and why finding these families are important to the lives of children. The Tennessee Titans Game for Adoption will occur on August 14, 2004 in a pre-season game against the Cleveland Browns.

A few weeks prior to the game, REACT and the Department of Children's Services will participate in media interviews that will speak of the valuable role adoptive parents can have with children throughout their lives and why Tennessee needs adoptive parents. Throughout the football season and while supplies last, Wendy's Restaurants will provide tray liners and cups with the "Titans Adoption Awareness Schedule" in their restaurants. They will feature one commercial on each television program of *Titans All Access* that airs during the 2004 football season. In addition,

prior to kickoff on game day, adoption staff will be stationed at booths in front of the Coliseum entrances to answer any questions about the adoption process for prospective adoptive families. Large television screens will be playing public service announcements about adoption and the efforts of the Dave Thomas Foundation.

Dave Thomas, the founder of Wendy's Old Fashion Hamburger Restaurants, was adopted as a child and wanted to help other children to find permanent families. In 1992, Dave Thomas formulated his personal commitment to the cause of adoption and officially declared adoption as his "charity of choice" for his restaurant chain, which now has over 6,000 restaurants worldwide. In addition to distributing adoption literature in his restaurants, the Dave Thomas Foundation organizes charity golf tournaments, media campaigns and fundraising programs. His goal was to use Wendy's restaurants to provide the adoption message and to put it on the hearts and minds of their consumers in order to make a difference in their communities.

REACT is a state public/private partnership between the Tennessee Department of Children's Services and Family and Children's Service in Nashville, TN.

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